5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

Around food also is focused much of the prestige of an individual in his family. Here a man's standing is largely dependent upon his ability as a food provider and the woman's upon her industry in preparing the food. Failure on the part of either partner to fulfill these obligations is sufficient cause for a divorce.

Social Organization

Before describing the feasts and showing the way in which much of life centers around food, it is necessary to give a very brief description of the essentials of the social organization. There are two exogamous moieties, the Eagle and the Hawk, which are subdivided into clans. Descent is matrilineal, the clan consisting of an extended family, all related through the female line. The next kinship unit in order of size is the individual family, which may be monogamous, is frequently polygamous, and occasionally polyandric.

On the basis of locality the largest unit is the village. In the district where I lived there are five villages forming one linguistic unit. This is not and never has been, as far as I could observe, a political unit. In the past, warfare was frequent between the villages and there neither was nor is one chief for all of them, each having its own. The village is subdivided into hamlets,—Lesu into fifteen. Residence is matrilocal and so a hamlet will usually have many female members of the same clan. The hamlet has from two to seven or eight houses, each one having its communal cooking ground and generally a cook house also, for use on rainy days. With the exception of the very small ones, a hamlet has its own cemetery and men's house.

The society is agricultural. Gardening, fishing, hunting wild pigs, and cooking are the main everyday occupations. Trading is important and carried on according to exact and traditional rules. The familiar Melanesian gift-exchange is also practiced.

Frequency of Feasts

After living in this society for only a short time, one is impressed by the great frequency of feasts. The following is a list of occasions on which they are held.

Occasion	Name
Pregnancy	ɑnɪng asɪl tsɛgɣ (eating for infant)
Birth	Grɪmɣsi (name of dance performed by women at this rite)
Giving name to infant	Basisis (name)
Several months after birth if infant is strong	ɑnɪng asɪl wɒtwɒt tsegɣ (eating for strong infant)